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[ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE]

[ABSTRACT]

Disclosed is a method for locking a camera in a portable terminal by means of a cipher apparatus connected to the portable terminal, the portable
5 terminal including not only the camera for photographing an image, but also a memory for storing secret codes, an image processor for processing the photographed image, and a display unit for displaying the processed image, the method comprising the steps of: the cipher apparatus receiving information of the portable terminal, establishing a secret code, and transmitting enciphered data;
10 the portable terminal receiving the enciphered data and stopping an operation of the camera; and the cipher apparatus receiving information reporting a locked state of the camera, and storing and displaying the secret code and a number of the portable terminal.

15 [REPRESENTATIVE FIGURE]

FIGURE 2

[INDEX]

SECRET CODE, ENCIPHERING, LOCKING A CAMERA, RELEASING A
20 LOCKED STATE OF A CAMERA

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[SPECIFICATION]

[TITLE OF THE INVENTION]

METHOD FOR LOCKING AND RELEASING A CAMERA IN
PORTABLE TERMINAL HAVING THE CAMERA

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[BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS]

FIG. 1 is a block diagram showing an internal construction of a portable terminal according to the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a flowchart of a method for locking and releasing a camera in a
10 portable terminal having the camera according to the first embodiment of the present invention;

FIGs. 3A to 3I are views showing pieces of information displayed on a screen of a display unit in a portable terminal according to the present invention;

FIGs. 4A and 4B are block diagrams for describing a method according
15 to the second embodiment of the present invention, which employ portable terminals and cipher apparatuses, connected through cables or by wireless, respectively;

FIG. 5 is a flowchart showing a process of locking a camera in a portable terminal connected with a cipher apparatus according to the second embodiment
20 of the present invention;

FIG. 6 is a flowchart showing a process of releasing a camera in a portable terminal connected with a cipher apparatus according to the second embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 7 is a view for describing a method according to the third
25 embodiment of the present invention, showing a portable terminal located in a cell of a base station; and

FIG. 8 is a flowchart of a method of locking and releasing a camera of a portable terminal located in a cell of a base station according to the third embodiment of the present invention.

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[DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT]

[OBJECT OF THE INVENTION]

[RELATED FIELD AND PRIOR ART OF THE INVENTION]

The present invention relates to a portable terminal having a camera, and
35 more particularly to a method for locking and releasing a camera in a portable terminal having the camera, so as to prevent a user from using the camera in a predetermined area.

Recently, portable terminals, such as mobile phones and notebooks, have a growing tendency to be equipped with a camera, so as to provide a greater variety of services for users. However, in the current world in which the request
5 for security for technology is increasing day by day, the advent of a portable terminal equipped with a camera increases a danger that data requiring security may leak out. That is, data requiring security, such as technological data, documents, equipment, etc., of a company, may be photographed by a camera of a portable terminal and may thus be divulged to the outside.

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[SUBSTANTIAL MATTER OF THE INVENTION]

Accordingly, the present invention has been made to solve the above-mentioned problems occurring in the prior art, and an object of the present invention is to provide a method for locking and releasing a camera in a portable
15 terminal having the camera, so as to prevent a user from using the camera in a predetermined area.

In order to accomplish this object, there is provided a method for locking a camera in a portable terminal by means of a cipher apparatus connected to the
20 portable terminal, the portable terminal including not only the camera for photographing an image, but also a memory for storing secret codes, an image processor for processing the photographed image, and a display unit for displaying the processed image, the method comprising the steps of: the cipher apparatus receiving information of the portable terminal, establishing a secret
25 code, and transmitting enciphered data; the portable terminal receiving the enciphered data and stopping an operation of the camera; and the cipher apparatus receiving information reporting a locked state of the camera, and storing and displaying the secret code and a number of the portable terminal.

30 In accordance with another aspect of the present invention, there is provided a method for releasing a locked state of a camera in a portable terminal by means of a cipher apparatus connected to the portable terminal, the portable terminal including not only the camera for photographing an image, but also a memory for storing secret codes, an image processor for processing the
35 photographed image, and a display unit for displaying the processed image, the method comprising the steps of: the cipher apparatus receiving information of the portable terminal, and obtaining a secret code for the locked state of the camera

from a database for the portable terminal; the cipher apparatus transmitting enciphered data obtained from the secret code; the portable terminal receiving and deciphering the enciphered data, and comparing the secret code received from the cipher apparatus with one of the secret codes stored in the memory; and
5 enabling the camera to operate when the secret code coincides with said one of the secret codes stored in the memory as a result of the comparison.

In accordance with still another aspect of the present invention, there is provided a method for preventing a camera of a portable phone located in a cell
10 of a base station from being operated, the method comprising the steps of: the base station transmitting a camera locking signal to the portable terminal located in the cell of the base station, so as to prevent the camera from being used; and the portable terminal receiving the camera locking signal and controlling the camera so that the camera cannot operate.

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[CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF THE INVENTION]

Hereinafter, preferred embodiments of the present invention will be described with reference to the accompanying drawings. In the following description, a detailed description of known functions and configurations
20 incorporated herein will be omitted when it may make the subject matter of the present invention rather unclear.

Further, the following description will be given based on three embodiments of the present invention. The first embodiment of the present
25 invention employs an example in which a camera is locked and released by a user interface. The second embodiment of the present invention employs an example in which a camera is locked and released by a cipher apparatus. The third embodiment of the present invention employs an example in which a camera of a portable terminal located in a cell of a base station is locked and
30 released. In the following description, the three examples as above will be the basis.

FIG. 1 is a block diagram showing an internal construction of a portable terminal according to the present invention.

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Referring to FIG. 1, an RF unit 121 performs transmission and reception functions of the portable terminal. The RF unit 121 includes an RF transmitter

for upward converting a frequency of a transmitted signal and amplifying the transmitted signal and an RF receiver for low-noise amplifying a received signal and downward converting the frequency of the received signal. A data processor 123 includes a transmitter for encoding and modulating the transmitted
5 signal and a receiver for demodulating and decoding the received signal. That is, the data processor 123 may include a MODEM (MODulator and DEModulator) and a CODEC (CORDER/DECoder).

An audio processor 125 reproduces a received audio signal outputted
10 from the data processor 123 or transfers a transmitted audio signal outputted from a microphone to the data processor 123. A key input unit 127 includes various function keys for input of various functions and keys for input of number and character information. The function keys according to the present invention may include a camera mode key, a camera locking mode key, a camera releasing
15 mode key, a confirmation key, a cancel key, etc. The camera mode key is a key for a conversion into the camera mode, the camera locking mode key is a key for locking the camera, and the camera releasing mode key is a key for releasing the locked state of the camera. Description about the other functions keys will be given later with reference to FIG. 2.

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A memory 129 may include a program memory section and a data memory section. The program memory section may store programs for controlling the general operation of the portable terminal. The data memory section may temporarily store data generated in the course of executing the
25 programs, and stores secret codes, etc. A camera 150 takes a photograph of image data and has an image sensor for converting an optical signal to an electric signal. Here, the camera sensor may be a CCD (Charge Coupled Device) sensor.

A control unit 110 controls the general operation of the portable terminal.
30 Further, the data processor 123 may belong to the control unit 110. The control unit 110 enables the memory 129 to store a secret code and prevents an image processor 170 from processing the image photographed by the camera 150.

The image processor 170 generates image data for displaying an image
35 for the image signal inputted from the camera 150. The image processor 170 transmits the image signal received under the control of the control unit 110 correspondingly to the standard of a display unit 180, and compresses or

decompresses the image data. The display unit 180 may employ an LCD, etc., and receives the image data from the image processor 170 and displays the image data on a screen. The connection port 130 is connected to the cipher apparatus, which will be described later, and is necessary in the interfacing between the
5 cipher apparatus and the portable terminal.

FIG. 2 is a flowchart of a method for locking and releasing a camera in a portable terminal having the camera according to the first embodiment of the present invention. FIGs. 3A to 3I are views showing pieces of information
10 displayed on a screen of a display unit in the portable terminal according to the present invention. Hereinafter, a method of locking and releasing a camera by a user interface will be described with reference to FIGs. 1, 2, and 3.

In step 201, the control unit 110 checks whether a camera mode key
15 signal is inputted from the key input unit 127 or not. As a result of the checking, the control unit 110 maintains the initial state when a camera mode key signal is not inputted and controls step 203 to progress when a camera mode key signal is inputted. In step 203, the control unit 110 makes a shift into the camera mode and controls the display unit 180 to display a message, and then progresses step
20 205. Here, the displayed message in step 203 may be as shown in FIG. 3A. The displayed message as shown in FIG. 3A provides an opportunity of selection between the camera locking mode, the camera releasing mode, and an ending.

In step 205, the control unit 110 checks whether a camera locking mode
25 key signal is inputted from the key input unit 127 or not. As a result of the checking, the control unit 110 progresses step 219 when a camera locking mode key signal is not inputted and progresses step 207 when a camera locking mode key signal is inputted. In step 207, the control unit 110 makes a shift into the camera locking mode and controls the display unit 180 to display a window for
30 input of a secret code, and then progresses step 209. Here, the displayed message in step 207 may be as shown in FIG. 3B.

In step 209, the control unit 110 checks whether a secret code is inputted from the key input unit 127 or not. As a result of the checking, the control unit
35 110 repeatedly executes step 207 when a secret code is not inputted and proceeds to step 211 when a secret code is inputted. The secret code may be required to be inputted twice. That is to say, input of the secret code may be required once

in the window as shown in FIG. 3B and then again in the window as shown in FIG. 3C. When the initially inputted secret code and the re-inputted secret code do not coincide with each other, the camera locking mode cannot be established, that is, the camera cannot be locked. When the secret codes coincide with each other, the control unit 110 progresses step 211. In step 211, the control unit 110 controls the display unit 180 to display a message for confirmation of the secret code, and then progresses step 213. Here, the message displayed by the display unit 180 in step 211 may be as shown in FIG. 3D. That is, when a user inputs a secret code of "1234" twice, the display unit 180 displays the message as shown in FIG. 3D.

In step 213, the control unit 110 checks whether a confirmation key signal is inputted from the key input unit 127 or not. As a result of the checking, the control unit 110 progresses step 215 when a confirmation key signal is not inputted and progresses step 217 when a confirmation key signal is inputted. In step 215, the control unit 110 checks whether a cancel key signal is inputted from the key input unit 127 or not. As a result of the checking, the control unit 110 returns to step 211 when a cancel key signal is not inputted and ends the entire process when a cancel key signal is inputted.

In step 217, the control unit 110 makes a control for establishing the locking of the camera. In establishing the locking of the camera, the control unit 110 controls the memory 129 to store the inputted secret code. Further, the control unit 110 makes a control of preventing the image processor 170 from being operated and controls the display unit 180 to display a message, "camera is locked". The present invention pays main attention to a control method for stopping the operation of the image processor 170 so as to prevent the camera from being used but has no relation to the inner operation of the image processor 170, a description of which will thus be omitted here.

In step 219, the control unit 110 checks whether a camera releasing mode key signal is inputted from the key input unit 127 or not. As a result of the checking, the control unit 110 returns to step 203 when a camera releasing mode key signal is not inputted and proceeds to step 221 when a camera releasing mode key signal is inputted. In step 221, the control unit 110 makes a shift into the camera releasing mode and controls the display unit 180 to display a window for input of a secret code, and then proceeds to step 223. Here, the displayed

message in step 221 may be as shown in FIG. 3E.

In step 223, the control unit 110 checks whether a secret code is inputted from the key input unit 127 or not. As a result of the checking, the control unit
5 110 returns to step 221 when a secret code is not inputted and proceeds to step 225 when a secret code is inputted. In step 225, the control unit 110 compares the secret code inputted in step 223 with the secret code stored in the memory 129 in the camera locking mode and proceeds to step 227.

10 In step 227, the control unit 110 checks whether the secret codes coincide with each other or not. As a result of the checking, the control unit 110 returns to step 221 when the secret codes do not coincide with each other and proceeds to step 229 when the secret codes coincide with each other. In step 229, the control unit 110 releases the locking state of the camera. In releasing the
15 locking state of the camera, the control unit 110 enables the image processor 170 to be operated and deletes the secret code stored in the memory 129. Further, the control unit 110 controls the display unit 180 to display a message reporting the release of the locking state of the camera. Here, the message displayed by the display unit 180 in step 229 may be as shown in FIG. 3G.

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FIGs. 4A and 4B are block diagrams for describing a method according to the second embodiment of the present invention, which employ portable terminals and cipher apparatuses, connected through cables or by wireless, respectively.

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Referring to FIG. 4A, each of first to third cipher apparatuses 405 to 409 may be a terminal, such as a personal computer or a notebook, and may have a program for enciphering a secret code. The first to third cipher apparatuses 405 to 409 may be independently used. Further, a plurality of portable terminals
30 401 and 403 may be connected with the first to third cipher apparatuses 405 to 409 through UART (Universal Asynchronous Receiver/Transmitter) or USB (Universal Serial Bus) cables.

Hereinafter, description will be given for an example in which the first
35 cipher apparatus 405, the second cipher apparatus 407, and the third cipher apparatus 409 are used independently from each other and the cipher apparatuses to 409 are used in connection with a database 411. First, the case in which the

cipher apparatuses are used independently from each other will be described. A user of the cipher apparatuses connects the first portable terminal 401 with the first cipher apparatus 405 to lock a camera of the first portable terminal 401 and connects the second portable terminal 403 with the third cipher apparatus 409 to
5 lock a camera of the second portable terminal 403.

Once the cameras have been locked, the locking state of the first portable terminal 401 and the second portable terminal 403 can be released only by the first cipher apparatus 405 and the third cipher apparatus 409, respectively. It is
10 because the first to third cipher apparatuses 405 to 409 are used and operated independently from each other. Therefore, the first and third cipher apparatuses 405 and 409 employ a super key, which is a key capable of releasing the locking of the camera regardless of the secret code of the portable terminal. Therefore, the first and second portable terminals 401 and 403 can operate the camera when
15 they receive the super key from the cipher apparatuses 405 and 409, respectively. Next, the method according to the second embodiment of the present invention, which utilizes cipher apparatuses connected to a database, will be described in more detail with reference to FIGs. 5 and 6.

20 FIG. 5 is a flowchart showing a process of locking a camera in a portable terminal connected with a cipher apparatus according to the second embodiment of the present invention. With reference to FIGs. 1, 3, 4, and 5, a method for preventing a user from using a camera of a portable terminal will be described below.

25 When the cipher apparatus and the portable terminal are connected with each other through a USB cable, the cipher apparatus progresses step 501. In step 501, the cipher apparatus requests time information and the portable phone number. The time information includes information of year, month, day, and
30 time, stored in the portable terminal. In step 503, the control unit 110 reads its own number and time information from the memory 129. In step 505, the control unit 110 transmits the read number and time information to the cipher apparatus.

35 In step 507, the cipher apparatus receives the read number and time information of the portable terminal and randomly selects a camera locking secret code. In step 509, the cipher apparatus enciphers the randomly selected

camera locking secret code. In enciphering the code, the cipher apparatus utilizes the time information received from the portable terminal. In other words, the cipher apparatus performs the enciphering on the basis of the time information, for example, the cipher apparatus may convert the time information
5 into a binary number and then add or multiply the binary number to or by a predetermined parameter. In step 511, the cipher apparatus transfers the data enciphered based on time to the portable terminal. The enciphered data contain the camera locking secret code.

10 In step 513, the control unit 110 deciphers the enciphered data and stores the camera locking secret code in the memory 129. In step 515, the control unit 110 locks the camera. In locking the camera, the control unit 110 stops the image processor 170 and prevents the image processor 170 from being operated. Therefore, the display unit 180 cannot receive image data inputted from the
15 image processor 170, and the memory 129 cannot store image data. In step 517, the control unit 110 transfers information reporting the execution of the locking of the camera to the cipher apparatus.

In step 519, the cipher apparatus, which has received the information
20 reporting the execution of the locking of the camera, registers the camera locking secret code and the portable phone number in the database 411. In step 521, the cipher apparatus displays a message reporting completion of the locking of the camera. The completion of the locking of the camera may be displayed as shown in FIG. 3F.

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FIG. 6 is a flowchart showing a process of releasing a camera in a portable terminal connected with a cipher apparatus according to the second embodiment of the present invention. With reference to FIGs. 1, 3, 4, and 6, a method of releasing the locking of a camera of a portable terminal will be
30 described below.

When the cipher apparatus and the portable terminal are connected with each other through a USB cable, the cipher apparatus progresses step 601. In step 601, the cipher apparatus requests time information and the portable phone
35 number. The time information includes information of year, month, day, and time, stored in the portable terminal. In step 603, the control unit 110 reads its own number and time information from the memory 129. In step 605, the

control unit 110 transmits the read number and time information to the cipher apparatus.

In step 607, the cipher apparatus refers to the database 411 by means of
5 the received portable phone number to read the registered camera locking secret code. In step 609, the cipher apparatus enciphers the camera locking secret code registered in the database 411. In enciphering the code, the cipher apparatus utilizes the time information received from the portable terminal. In other words, the cipher apparatus performs the enciphering on the basis of the
10 time information, for example, the cipher apparatus may convert the time information into a binary number and then add or multiply the binary number to or by a predetermined parameter. In step 611, the cipher apparatus transfers the data enciphered based on time to the portable terminal. The enciphered data contain the camera locking secret code.

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In step 613, the control unit 110 deciphers the enciphered data and compares the camera locking secret code transmitted from the cipher apparatus with the camera locking secret code stored in the memory 129. In step 615, as a result of the comparison, the control unit 110 transfers information reporting
20 occurrence of discord between the secret codes to the cipher apparatus when the secret codes do not coincide with each other, and releases the locking of the camera when the secret codes coincide with each other. In releasing the locking of the camera, the control unit 110 deletes the camera locking secret code stored in the memory 129 and enables the operation of the image processor 170.
25 When the image processor 170 can operate, the display unit 180 can display image data photographed by the camera 150 and the memory 129 can store the image data. Further, the control unit 110 transmits the information reporting the release of the locking of the camera to the cipher apparatus in step 617.

30 In step 619, when the information reporting the release of the locking of the camera is received from the portable terminal, the cipher apparatus deletes the camera locking secret code and the portable terminal number registered in the database 411. Here, the cipher apparatus displays a message reporting release of the locking of the camera, an example of which is shown in FIG. 3G.
35 However, when the information reporting occurrence of discord between the secret codes is received from the portable terminal, the cipher apparatus repeats steps 601 to 619. Here, the cipher apparatus displays a message reporting the

repetition of the above steps, an example of which is shown in FIG. 3H.

FIG. 7 is a view for describing a method according to the third embodiment of the present invention, showing a portable terminal located in a cell of a base station. FIG. 8 is a flowchart of a method of locking and releasing a camera of a portable terminal located in a cell of a base station according to the third embodiment of the present invention. With reference to FIGs. 1, 3, 7, and 8, a method of locking and releasing a camera of a portable terminal located in a cell of a base station will be described below.

A base station 701 transmits a camera locking signal to a portable terminal 703 having a camera of a portable terminal located in a predetermined cell of the base station 701. Here, the base station 701 periodically transmits the camera locking signal at a predetermined time interval. Here, the camera locking signal is a signal for preventing the camera of the portable terminal 703 from being operated, which is defined when the system is designed. The issue of defining the camera locking signal has no relation to the present invention, so description thereof is omitted here.

In step 801, the control unit 110 checks whether a camera locking signal is received or not from the base station 701. As a result of the checking, when a camera locking signal is not received, the control unit 110 proceeds to step 803. When a camera locking signal is not received by the portable terminal, the camera of the portable terminal can be used. In step 803, the control unit 110 locks the camera and controls the display unit 180 to display such a message as shown in FIG. 3I. In locking the camera, the control unit 110 controls the operation of the image processor 170 to be stopped. Then, the display unit 180 cannot display image data and the memory 129 cannot store the image data.

For example, the base station 701 periodically transmits the camera locking signal at a constant time interval of one minute. The portable terminal 703 having received the camera locking signal stops the operation of the image processor 170 for said one minute. If the portable terminal 703 moves out of the predetermined cell of the base station 701, a user of the portable terminal 703 can use the camera of the portable terminal 705.

While the invention has been shown and described with reference to

certain preferred embodiments thereof, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that various changes in form and details may be made therein without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims.

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[EFFECTS OF THE INVENTION]

As described above, the present invention can prevent a camera of a portable terminal from being used in a specific area, such as a building of a company or a factory, thereby protecting data requiring security, such as
10 technological data, documents, equipment, etc., of a company, against divulgence.

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[PATENT CLAIMS]

1. A method for locking a camera in a portable terminal, the portable terminal including not only the camera for photographing an image, but also a memory for storing secret codes, an image processor for processing the photographed image, and a display unit for displaying the processed image, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving a secret code and storing the secret code in the memory; and
stopping an operation of the image processor.

2. A method for releasing a locked state of a camera in a portable terminal, the portable terminal including not only the camera for photographing an image, but also a memory for storing secret codes, an image processor for processing the photographed image, and a display unit for displaying the processed image, the method comprising the steps of:

comparing an inputted secret code with one of the secret codes stored in the memory; and

enabling the image processor to operate when the inputted secret code coincides with said one of the secret codes stored in the memory as a result of the comparison.

3. A method for locking a camera in a portable terminal by means of a cipher apparatus connected to the portable terminal, the portable terminal including not only the camera for photographing an image, but also a memory for storing secret codes, an image processor for processing the photographed image, and a display unit for displaying the processed image, the method comprising the steps of:

(1) the cipher apparatus receiving information of the portable terminal, establishing a secret code, and transmitting enciphered data;

(2) the portable terminal receiving the enciphered data and stopping an operation of the camera; and

(3) the cipher apparatus receiving information reporting a locked state of the camera, and storing and displaying the secret code and a number of the portable terminal.

4. The method as claimed in claim 3, wherein step (1) comprises the steps of:

the cipher apparatus requesting time information and the number of the

portable terminal;

the portable terminal transmitting the time information and the number of the portable terminal itself;

the cipher apparatus receiving the time information and the number of
5 the portable terminal, establishing the secret code, and enciphering the secret code by means of the time information; and

the cipher apparatus transmitting enciphered data obtained from the secret code.

10 5. The method as claimed in claim 3, wherein step (2) comprises the steps of:

storing the secret code in the memory; and
stopping an operation of the image processor.

15 6. A method for releasing a locked state of a camera in a portable terminal by means of a cipher apparatus connected to the portable terminal, the portable terminal including not only the camera for photographing an image, but also a memory for storing secret codes, an image processor for processing the photographed image, and a display unit for displaying the processed image, the
20 method comprising the steps of:

(1) the cipher apparatus receiving information of the portable terminal, and obtaining a secret code for the locked state of the camera from a database for the portable terminal;

(2) the cipher apparatus transmitting enciphered data obtained from the
25 secret code;

(3) the portable terminal receiving and deciphering the enciphered data, and comparing the secret code received from the cipher apparatus with one of the secret codes stored in the memory; and

(4) enabling the camera to operate when the secret code coincides with
30 said one of the secret codes stored in the memory as a result of the comparison.

7. The method as claimed in claim 8, wherein step (4) comprises the steps of:

enabling the image processor to operate; and
35 transmitting information reporting a released state of the camera to the cipher apparatus.

8. A method for preventing a camera of a portable phone located in a cell of a base station from being operated, the method comprising the steps of:

(1) the base station transmitting a camera locking signal to the portable terminal located in the cell of the base station, so as to prevent the camera from
5 being used; and

(2) the portable terminal receiving the camera locking signal and controlling the camera so that the camera cannot operate.

9. The method as claimed in claim 12, wherein, in step (1), the base
10 station periodically transmits the camera locking signal at a predetermined time interval.

10. The method as claimed in claim 12, wherein step (2) comprises the steps of:

15 checking whether the portable terminal receives the camera locking signal or not; and

preventing an image processor of the portable phone from being operated to process a photographed image for a predetermined time period when the portable terminal receives the camera locking signal.

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